

Mental Health First Aid

Improve Mental Health in Your Workplace

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Canada trains Canadians to comfortably and proactively respond to those who may require mental health assistance.

A NEW KIND OF FIRST AID

From ergonomically correct office chairs to protective safety goggles, physical safety in the workplace has become a primary concern across all industries and occupations. If an incident does occur, many organizations have first aid attendants who can help until the paramedics arrive. And now they can train someone as a mental health first aider for mental health problems.

Employers and members of the community are taking note of the impact mental health problems have on society and are doing something about it. Human resource officers, teachers, front-line mental health professionals, the general public and people from many other disciplines are training in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Canada, a program spearheaded by the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

MHFA Canada is an evidence-based training program that is designed, just like traditional first aid, to enable people to recognize symptoms and provide support until professional help can step in. It is an educational course for the public. No experience in mental health is necessary.

The goal of the course is threefold.

1. Educate participants and help them identify signs of mental health problems in co-workers, friends, family, strangers and even themselves.
2. Teach participants how to support the individual and to help seek appropriate treatment for them.
3. Reduce the stigma of mental illness. More than half of people with mental health problems will be too ashamed to seek treatment.

Excerpt from an article of the same title in "Minding the Workplace", an insert in the May 2007 edition of Venture Magazine

MENTAL HEALTH & THE CANADIAN WORKPLACE

- Mental health problems and illnesses typically account for **30 percent of disability claims and 70 percent of the total costs** [of disability claims]
- **Only 34 percent** of employees report having ready access to services and tools at work to help with mental health issues
- **35 million days** are lost each year due to mental health
- **\$50 billion** is lost in productivity each year due to mental illness in the Canadian labour force
- 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health problem every year, but many employees are not well informed about how to recognize the symptoms and provide appropriate assistance to their colleagues
- The stigma associated with mental health problems often hinders employees from seeking appropriate help for themselves or others

**Mental Health
First Aid** CANADA



Mental Health
Commission
of Canada

Commission de
la santé mentale
du Canada

To learn more about Mental Health First Aid, please visit www.mhfa.ca, email mhfa@mentalhealthcommission.ca, or call 1-866-989-3985.

Mental Health First Aid Canada is a program of the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

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WITH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID, ANYONE CAN HELP

MHFA Canada shares the same overall purpose as traditional First Aid – to ensure someone trained to provide effective and immediate intervention is always nearby. Employees certified in MHFA can help organizations:

- Preserve life where another employee may be at risk of hurting themselves and/or contributing to an unsafe work environment
- Recognize and understand the symptoms of mental health problems, including those related to substance use
- Provide help to prevent a mental health problem from developing into a more serious state
- Promote the recovery of good mental health by accommodating employees in distress or recovering from a crisis
- Increase productivity and reduce absenteeism and overall pressure on benefits

MHFA CANADA COURSES

Mental health problems will affect **one in three Canadians** at some point in their life. Chances are you know someone who needs help. Your employees' actions may determine how quickly a colleague with a mental health problem gets help and/or recovers. Here's how your employees can get trained in MHFA Canada:

MHFA CANADA BASIC COURSE

This 12-hour training course teaches staff how to identify the signs and provide initial help to colleagues facing mental health problems or crises. Topics include defining mental health, symptoms of common mental health problems, a step-by-step model on providing MHFA, information about effective interventions and treatments, and how to access professional help in your area. Mental health problems covered include depression and other mood disorders, anxiety disorders, disorders associated with psychosis, and substance-related disorders. Courses are taught by certified MHFA Canada Instructors with extensive experience in mental health.

BECOME A CERTIFIED MHFA CANADA INSTRUCTOR

MHFA Canada is also accepting applications from qualified individuals who would like to become certified MHFA Canada Instructors for their organization. Contact us or visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca for more information about qualifications and the application process.

PROVEN OUTCOMES

MHFA was developed by the Centre for Mental Health Research at the Australian National University and has been adapted internationally in over 25 countries.

Research indicates that MHFA improved participants' knowledge of mental disorders, reduced stigma, increased the amount of help provided to others and enhanced participant awareness of their own mental health.

Governments in Australia and Scotland have now made MHFA part of their national mental health strategy.

"When First Aid came into existence, the concept of teaching the average citizen to apply pressure to a wound saved people's lives. MHFA will do something similar, by assisting people in making the right kind of decisions."

Former Supervisor of the Edmonton Police Service, Police & Crisis Team

CONTACT US

Visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca, email mhfa@mentalhealthcommission.ca, or call **1-866-989-3985** for more information on how MHFA Canada can benefit your organization.

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